

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes

March 23, 2015

Regular meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Monday, March 23, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the Finance Committee Room, #112, Town Hall with the following members present: D. Bruce, M. Iwanowicz, J. Denneen, J. Burke, C. Lane, J. McDermott, A. Walsh, T. Williams, M. Trudell, A. Ragosta, P. Hinton, J. Lowre, S. Lawson. Members absent were: D. Crowley, and A. Healy. Also in attendance was Fire Chief T. Bailey, Finance Director M. Thompson, and Town Accountant J. Cuneo. 8:25 - Town Administrator J. Johnson. School Committee Members: Chairman P. Shield, N. Gallivan, M. Friscia, M. Ryan, J. Geosits, L. Lynch, Superintendent of Schools, J. Kenny, Assistant Superintendent, L. McKilligan, Special Needs and RTM Member S. Ober.

7:00 – Quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by the Vice-Chairman J. McDermott. Chairman D. Bruce stepped down due to a family member being employed in the School Department.

May 4, 2015 Spring Annual Town Meeting

School Committee Chairman spoke to the FY2016 School Budget. They are requesting \$40,335,285, Town Administrator is recommending \$39,739,633 representing a \$595,652 gap (2.22%) They also spoke to instituting an increase in students fees, athletics, and increase in lunch prices. They are requesting no additional personnel. Town Administrator spoke to the School Budget represents a 3.76% increase.

School Department has instituted an early retirement incentive for employees. This will allow for new employees to come in a lesser step (most of the retirees would be on the top step). 175 employees are eligible for this incentive. They are also reducing 2.5 positions, pre-school and kindergarten teacher. They are looking into replacing a full time position with two part time positions (19 hours) thus reducing benefits. 7,000 students in the schools, with a 3% increase in student costs.

L. McKilligan, Special Ed Director spoke to the Special Ed Budget being reduced \$300,000 and are working with the collaborative in an attempt to further reduce special ed costs and combine services. She should know prior to Town Meeting whether she is successful. She feels that the \$300,000 is attainable and, it is hoped, that Governor's numbers will help further reduce the gap. They are exploring different avenues to help

the Town and School District. They are not optimistic with circuit breaker numbers. Possibility of a new student moving into the district by April 1, with a potential additional cost of \$187,000 to \$225,000. School Department is holding a public hearing on School Choice on April 9, 2015. School Choice allows parents to send their children to schools in communities other than the city or town in which they reside. Once a student is under school choice, there is the obligation to honor their career path. Principals review the academic and discipline records of the student. In addition they are looking into a purchasing program through American Express which should save money, they are exploring a lot of different avenues to help Town and School District.

When Grants are cut, they impact services to the students, but don't impact the appropriation.

Consolidated Spreadsheet , as presented, for FY2016 dated March 19, 2015 is level funded with the exception of the \$412,874 for Special Ed.

Personnel – More than one half of the teachers are at the top step, all others will move up a step and will receive a cost of living increase at an approximate increase of 4.8%. In addition, teachers can increase their salaries with obtaining a degree allowing them to move over a lane. Majority of the staff receive a cost of living increase, lane changes become the base. To date, two teachers, principal, athletic director plus support personnel have announced retirement.

Insurance – Schools have gone to rate saver and have signed onto the MIIA.

Lunch program – Superintendent spoke to it breaking even this year. They will be increasing lunch prices by 50 cents. They are trying to put most of the expenses into a revolving account in order to be more self supporting.

8:25 – Town Administrator J. Johnson

Schools have applied for reimbursement from Mass Health and Medicaid for students. They are unable to force the parents to include them in their insurance. This is a legislative issue.

Superintendent Lynch spoke to some things are out of their control, trying to create efficiencies throughout, they are looking into consolidation and what can be managed, he would like to come back to speak to the Committee prior to Town Meeting.

Finance Committee Public Hearing

Public Hearing on the May 4, 2015 Spring Annual Town Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 30, 2015 at 7:30 p.m. in Room #112, Town Hall.

Finance Committee
Minutes
March 23, 2015
Page 3

Minutes

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by J. Burke to approve the February 26, 2015 Minutes, Motion Passed (12-0-1) (P. Hinton abstained) (14 voting)

Adjourn:

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by J. Lowre to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 p.m, Motion Passed (13-0-0) (13 voting) Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Clare P. Abril
Clerk